



[Getting to the Table: An interview with Jim Lukaszewski, part 8 of 8](#)

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Jim Lukaszewski: I think the biggest message here is that people keep searching for this table. We keep that as the big question, and I think communicators are surprised to learn, as are HR people, as are attorneys, as are other staff functions, that this is the universal question. They all have this question on their minds, they all want to know—even lawyers.



I was with a group of lawyers a while ago. They're a group of lawyers who started a trade association. What all of these attorneys have in common is they are the litigation managers for the nation's thousand largest companies, and when they called me to come and speak at their opening of their inaugural meeting, I said, "Well, I'm happy to come but I'm not an attorney."

They said, "We know that, but you talk about this business of getting to be at the table and we're concerned about that."

I said, "Let me get this straight. You work for one of the Fortune top ten. You have a problem getting to the table? You're in charge of litigation, you're in charge of what, trillions of dollars probably?"

He said, "Yes, certainly many, many, many, many billions."

"And you're having trouble getting to the bosses?"

He said, "Absolutely."

So I came and spoke. The questions being asked of me, and these are all among the most accomplished attorneys on this planet, were the same as the PR people asked me: "How do I get there, how do I punch through, how do I make them listen to me? How do I make them take my advice?"

Here's the kicker: I spend most of my time working with operating people, and the CEO has this question for me: "Jim, where is this table all these people keep talking about? And if I find it, do I actually have to go there and listen to all these whiny staff people?"

The answer really is: The table is you. The table is the person walking in the room who can do those things I talked about, who can help them find the next steps, who can give them advice in real time, and who can do it right there in the moment, so to speak. By that definition, you are the table.

I always tell people, “If you ever find this place, you want to stay away from it because no CEO wants to go there.”

That’s my story.

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Jim’s new book, [Why Should the Boss Listen to You: The Seven Disciplines of the Trusted Strategic Advisor](#), is available at [Amazon.com](#). Jim may be reached at [www.e911.com](#).

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